

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Cancelled)

2. (Previously Presented) A pneumatic tire according to claim 3, wherein the pseudo-land portion is formed such that a cross sectional area thereof is gradually increased toward a given circumferential direction of the tire.

3. (Currently Amended) A pneumatic tire comprising:

a tread portion provided with at least one circumferential groove extending along a circumferential direction of the tire;

a plurality of slant grooves, each having a leading groove wall and a trailing groove wall, each opening to the circumferential groove and obliquely extending from such an opening position toward a ground contact end of a tread thereby defining blocks; and

a pseudo-land portion formed in the circumferential groove so as to promote a smooth inflow of water flowing from the circumferential groove into a first the slant groove of the plurality of slant grooves, wherein:

said pseudo-land portion comprises a slant face on a ground contact side so that said slant face does not contact a ground surface and faces the opening of the first slant groove;

the opening of the first slant groove is between the slant face and the leading wall of the first slant groove;

said opening position of said first slant groove is located on a side of the circumferential groove opposite to said pseudo-land portion formed on another side of said circumferential groove; and

the pseudo-land portion is arranged in the circumferential groove so as to provide an end part at a larger side of the cross sectional area of the pseudo-land portion close to the portion of the first slant groove opened to the circumferential groove;

a groove shape, defined by the leading and trailing walls of the first slant groove as it extends toward the circumferential groove, is extended axially inward by a second shape defined by an axially outer edge of the pseudo-land portion and the leading wall of the first slant groove;
and

the blocks defined by the slant grooves do not extend axially inward of the end part of the pseudo land portion.

4. (Previously Presented) A pneumatic tire according to claim 3, wherein the pseudo-land portion is arranged adjacent to a first groove wall of the circumferential groove not opened to the slant groove.

5. (Original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 4, wherein the pseudo-land portion is fixed to the first groove wall.

6. (Original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 4, wherein the pseudo-land portion is arranged separately from the first groove wall.

7. (Previously Presented) A pneumatic tire according to claim 3, wherein the pseudo-land portion has such a part closest to the slant groove opening to the circumferential groove that a height measured from a groove bottom of the circumferential groove is within a range of 10-60% of a maximum depth of the circumferential groove.

8. (Previously Presented) A pneumatic tire according to claim 3, wherein the slant surface of the pseudo-land portion has a height that is gradually decreased toward the side of the slant groove opening to the circumferential groove.

9. (Original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 8, wherein the slant surface is substantially a flat shape.

10. (Original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 8, wherein the slant surface is substantially a curved shape.

11. (Original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 10, wherein a center of curvature in the slant surface is located outward from the slant surface in a radial direction of the tire.

12. (Original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 10, wherein a center of curvature in the slant surface is located inward from the slant surface in the radial direction of the tire.

13. (Original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 8, wherein when the slant surface of the pseudo-land portion is projected onto a ground contact face of the tire, its shape is approximately triangular or trapezoidal.

14. (Original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 8, wherein an oblique side opposite to a basic side in the slant surface successively enters in the ground contact face from a side near to a side wall of a rib-shaped land portion toward a side apart therefrom.

15. (Previously Presented) A pneumatic tire according to claim 8, wherein when a basic side and an oblique side are projected into the ground contact face of the tire, the slant surface is isosceles triangular wherein their length are substantially equal to each other and an angle (α) therebetween is within a range of not more than 20° .

16. (Previously Presented) A pneumatic tire according to claim 8, wherein a position of an intersecting point between a basic side and an oblique side is arranged at a lowest side of the slant surface viewing the tire from a front face.

17. (Previously Presented) A pneumatic tire according to claim 8, wherein a shape of an oblique side of the slant surface projected onto the ground contact face of the tire is a curved line in which a center of curvature is located outward in a widthwise direction of the tire.

18. (Previously Presented) A pneumatic tire according to claim 8, wherein a basic side of the slant surface is substantially the same height position as a maximum height position of a first groove wall.

19. (Previously Presented) A pneumatic tire according to claim 8, wherein a basic side of the slant surface is located inward from the maximum height position of a first groove wall in the radial direction of the tire.

20. (Previously Presented) A pneumatic tire according to claim 3, wherein a pair of circumferential grooves are arranged in the tread portion to form a rib-shaped land portion between these circumferential grooves.

21. (Original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 20, wherein the rib-shaped land portion is continuously arranged in the circumferential direction of the tire.

22. (Original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 20, wherein the rib-shaped land portion has a center position in the widthwise direction substantially coincident with a pattern center position.

23. (Original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 20, wherein the rib-shaped land portion has a cross angle (Θ) between the slant surface and a ground contact face of the rib-shaped land portion or a phantom plane arranged in parallel to such a ground contact face within a range of 120-150° viewing at a section in the widthwise direction of the tire.

24. (Currently Amended) A pneumatic tire according to claim 3, wherein a corner part of ~~a land portion defined by the arrangements of the circumferential groove, slant grooves and/or tread end at the side of the equatorial plane of the tire~~ first block of the blocks defined by the slant grooves is formed at an acute angle and arranged at a position entering in the ground contact region on the heels of the pseudo-land portion.

25. (Original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 24, wherein the corner part is arranged on the same circumference of the tire as an intersecting point between a section of the pseudo-land portion having a maximum sectional area and the oblique side of the slant surface or on an extension line of the oblique side.

26. (Original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 24, wherein the corner part is subjected to a chamfering.

27. (Original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 26, wherein the corner part is subjected to a chamfering forming a smoothly curved shape.

28. (Original) A pneumatic tire according to claim 24, wherein the corner part is connected with the pseudo-land portion.

29. (Cancelled)

30. (Previously Presented) A pneumatic tire according to claim 3, wherein all of the slant grooves each opening to each of a pair of circumferential grooves and extending toward the respective ground contact end of the tread are arranged in a direction of successively entering in the ground contact face from the side of the circumferential groove toward the side of the ground contact end to thereby form a directional pattern in the tread portion.

31. (Currently Amended) A pneumatic tire comprising:

a tread portion provided with at least one circumferential groove extending along a circumferential direction of the tire;

~~and~~ a plurality of slant grooves, each having a leading groove wall and a trailing groove wall, each opening to the circumferential groove and obliquely extending from such an opening position toward a ground contact end of a tread thereby defining blocks; and

a pseudo-land portion formed in the circumferential groove so as to promote a smooth inflow of water flowing from the circumferential groove into a first the slant groove of the plurality of slant grooves, wherein:

said pseudo-land portion comprises a slant face on a ground contact side so that said slant face does not contact a ground surface and faces the opening of the first slant groove;

the opening of the first slant groove is between the slant face and the leading wall of the first slant groove;

the pseudo-land portion is arranged adjacent to a first groove wall of the circumferential groove not opened to the slant groove; and

the pseudo-land portion is arranged in the circumferential groove so as to provide an end part at a larger side of the cross sectional area of the pseudo-land portion close to the portion of the first slant groove opened to the circumferential groove;

a groove shape, defined by the leading and trailing walls of the first slant groove as it extends toward the circumferential groove, is extended axially inward by a second shape defined by an axially outer edge of the pseudo-land portion and the leading wall of the first slant groove;
and

the blocks defined by the slant grooves do not extend axially inward of the end part of the pseudo land portion.

32. (Previously Presented) A pneumatic tire according to claim 31, wherein the pseudo-land portion is formed such that a cross sectional area thereof is gradually increased toward a given circumferential direction of the tire.

33. (Cancelled)

34. (Cancelled)

35. (Currently Amended) A pneumatic tire according to claim 3, wherein:

~~said slant grooves define slant blocks of said tread portion; and~~

a border of the circumferential groove is defined by an imaginary circumferential line joining tips of corner portions of axially innermost ~~slant~~ blocks relative to an equatorial plane of said tire.

36. (Currently Amended) A pneumatic tire according to claim 31, wherein:

~~said slant grooves define slant blocks of said tread portion; and~~

a border of the circumferential groove is defined by an imaginary circumferential line joining tips of corner portions of axially innermost ~~slant~~ blocks relative to an equatorial plane of said tire.

37. (Currently Amended) A pneumatic tire comprising:

a tread portion provided with at least one circumferential groove extending along a circumferential direction of the tire;

a plurality of slant grooves, each having a leading groove wall and a trailing groove wall, each opening to the circumferential groove and obliquely extending from such an opening position toward a ground contact end of a tread thereby defining blocks; and

a pseudo-land portion formed in the circumferential groove so as to promote a smooth inflow of water flowing from the circumferential groove into a first the slant groove of the plurality of slant grooves, wherein:

said pseudo-land portion comprises a slant face on a ground contact side so that said slant face does not contact a ground surface and faces the opening of the first slant groove;

the opening of the first slant groove is between the slant face and the leading wall of the first slant groove;

said opening position of said first slant groove is located on a side of the circumferential groove opposite to said pseudo-land portion formed on another side of said circumferential groove;

the pseudo-land portion is arranged in the circumferential groove so as to provide an end part at a larger side of the cross sectional area of the pseudo-land portion close to the portion of the first slant groove opened to the circumferential groove;

~~said slant grooves define slant blocks of said tread portion~~;

a groove shape, defined by the leading and trailing walls of the first slant groove as it extends toward the circumferential groove, is extended axially inward by a second shape defined by an axially outer edge of the pseudo-land portion and the leading wall of the first slant groove;

the blocks defined by the slant grooves do not extend axially inward of the end part of the pseudo land portion; and

said pseudo-land ~~portions are~~ portion is separate and apart from said ~~slant~~ blocks.

38. (Currently Amended) A pneumatic tire comprising:

a tread portion provided with at least one circumferential groove extending along a circumferential direction of the tire;

~~and~~ a plurality of slant grooves, each having a leading groove wall and a trailing groove wall, each opening to the circumferential groove and obliquely extending from such an opening position toward a ground contact end of a tread thereby defining blocks; and

a pseudo-land portion formed in the circumferential groove so as to promote a smooth inflow of water flowing from the circumferential groove into a first the slant groove of the plurality of slant grooves, wherein:

said pseudo-land portion comprises a slant face on a ground contact side so that said slant face does not contact a ground surface and faces the opening of the first slant groove;

the opening of the first slant groove is between the slant face and the leading wall of the first slant groove;

the pseudo-land portion is arranged adjacent to a first groove wall of the circumferential groove not opened to the slant groove;

the pseudo-land portion is arranged in the circumferential groove so as to provide an end part at a larger side of the cross sectional area of the pseudo-land portion close to the portion of the first slant groove opened to the circumferential groove;

~~said slant grooves define slant blocks of said tread portion~~

a groove shape, defined by the leading and trailing walls of the first slant groove as it extends toward the circumferential groove, is extended axially inward by a second shape defined by an axially outer edge of the pseudo-land portion and the leading wall of the first slant groove;

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
U.S. Appln. No.: 09/674,039

Attorney Docket # Q59956

the blocks defined by the slant grooves do not extend axially inward of the end part of the
pseudo land portion; and

said pseudo-land ~~portions are~~ portion is separate and apart from said ~~slant~~ blocks.